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SUBJECT: INDIA: 2008 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 120019

1. (U) Below is New Delhi's submission for the 2008 Country Report on Terrorism for India.

2. (U) Begin Text:

India continued to rank among the world's most terror-afflicted countries in 2008. In a pivotal moment that is now called "26/11", terrorists struck at a variety of locations in Mumbai from November 26-28, killing at least 183 (including 22 foreigners) and injuring over 300 more. This attack was the most recent in a long list of lethal terrorist incidents this year. Among the major events:

On May 13, Jaipur experienced serial bomb blasts at crowded market areas and at Hindu temples. At least 60 people were killed, and more than 150 injured.

On June 29 Maoist insurgents attacked and killed 33 security forces in Malkangiri district in the eastern state of Orissa.

While not on Indian soil, Indian interests were attacked in Afghanistan when terrorists drove a vehicle-borne IED into the outer perimeter of the Indian Embassy in Kabul on July 7. Two Indian diplomats died and a number of Afghan citizens were wounded.

Serial bombs were set off in Bangalore on July 25 in both business and industrial areas. At least one individual died, while 8 were injured.

On July 26, in Gujarat's capital, Ahmedabad, 21 devices exploded killing 54 and injuring at least 156. These explosions took place in market areas, on buses and other vehicles and at the hospital to which the wounded from the first serial bomb blast were being treated.

Terrorists detonated serial bombs in New Delhi on September 13 in a variety of market places and other crowded public areas. These attacks killed at least 20 individuals and wounded more than 80.

On October 30, insurgents detonated a series of nine bomb blasts throughout the northeastern state of Assam killing approximately 110 people.

None of the perpetrators of these attacks has yet been prosecuted. The Indian government assesses that Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) or other South Asian Islamic extremist groups such as the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (Bangladesh) were behind most of these events. The Government of India believes that these attacks are aimed at creating a break-down in India-Pakistan relations, fostering Hindu-Muslim violence within India, and harming India's economic centers to try to retard India's economic resurgence.

Eastern India (including the Northeastern region) has a long history of Maoist (left-wing extremist) and insurgent terrorist activity that has challenged state writ and control, governance structures, and the ruling political class. In 2008 there were 50 terrorist attacks in Eastern India that killed approximately 500 individuals. No American citizens were targeted or victims of terrorism in any of these incidents.

Insurgent groups, often fighting for recognition, political and economic rights, or independence are active in the Northeast. Failure to properly accommodate the competing interests of diverse ethnic groups, low levels of development, and success of previous insurgent movements in creating new Indian states are cited as explanatory factors for the appeal of insurgent movements. In 1990 the Government of India banned one of the most active insurgent groups, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), and in the 2004 Country Report on Terrorism the United States listed it as an "Other Selected Terrorist Organization". ULFA is alleged to have been involved in several terrorist attacks in 2008, including the bicycle bomb blast on September 18 in Chirang district (20 injured) and the October 30 serial blasts.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist), commonly referred to as Maoist/Naxalites, espouses violent revolutionary struggle to achieve inclusive economic growth and a more democratic state -- although analysts debate the extent of their ideological as opposed to monetary motivations. Maoists are active in the states of Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal -- the so-called "Red Corridor". Companies, Indian and foreign, operating in Maoist strongholds are sometimes targets for extortion.

Although there is no evidence that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) intend to conduct attacks in India, there are indications that the LTTE has smuggling operations to move supplies from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka. In addition, it is possible that LTTE operatives fleeing from the Sri Lankan Army's northern offensive may be retreating into Tamil Nadu.

The terrorist attacks in Mumbai carried out on November 26-28 were the first time that terrorists deliberately attacked places where foreigners and wealthy Indians were likely to be. In a series of well-planned, coordinated attacks, terrorists entered Mumbai from the sea and attacked people in two western hotels, a Jewish center, the main train station, and locations en route to those destinations. They also planted bombs in two taxis that later exploded in different locations in the city. While accounts differ, it is believed that ten terrorists killed at least 183 people, including 14 members of the police and security forces, and injured over 300 people. One terrorist was arrested and nine were killed. The terrorists appeared to have been well-trained and able to use sophisticated technology, such as GPS trackers. Local and state police proved to be poorly trained and equipped, and lacked central control to coordinate an effective response.

State governments have expressed interest in augmenting their security forces, either creating or buttressing state-level assets, or hosting central level units to address the increased terrorist threat.

Chhattisgarh's government has invested in counter-insurgency training for police and paramilitary forces at its Jungle Warfare Training Center. Nevertheless, there is no clear unified command structure between state and federal forces in counter-insurgency efforts, hampering their effectiveness.

In response to the Mumbai attacks, the Indian government has proposed a new agency, the National Investigative Agency, to create a national-level capability to investigate and potentially prosecute such acts. It is too early to assess the impact that this new agency will have on India's overburdened and uncoordinated counterterrorism structures.

The press continues to highlight a series of crucial gaps in intelligence sharing and implementation of effective counterterrorism measures which remain at the heart of the Mumbai debacle. It is also too early to comment on whether the addition of this new investigative authority will assist in bringing specific cases to justice in the slow and laborious Indian court system.

Also in response to the Mumbai attacks, the GOI amended some existing laws to strengthen the hands of security and law enforcement agencies in fighting terrorism. Two themes have framed the public debate on the new legislation: states' rights vs. federal power; and civil liberties vs. stronger law enforcement powers.

Illicit funding sources that may have been exploited to finance the operations are being closely investigated. It seems highly likely that funding sources may have included credit cards, hawala (an informal money transfer system), charities, and wealthy donors. All of these sources and their potential for fraud and funding of terrorist and criminal activities are receiving greater scrutiny in India than in past years in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. The two groups suspected of perpetrating the Mumbai attacks) Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Lashkar-e-Toiba) have used the vast network of mosques, madrassas, and fundraising offices throughout Pakistan to raise money and recruit members for violence and terrorist activity. In addition to the Mumbai attacks, the rise in terrorist attacks and their coordinated nature throughout India in 2008 suggest they were financially organized.

The Indian government has ceased consultations with Pakistan under their joint counterterrorism mechanism, stating that such talks with Pakistan are on hold until Islamabad demonstrates a lasting commitment to closing known terrorist training camps that exist on Pakistani soil or territory controlled by Pakistan, investigating fully charges that specific LeT members are culpable for the Mumbai attacks, and extraditing those who have committed terrorist attacks against India.

Indian officials, particularly in West Bengal and Assam, are concerned about the porous India-Bangladesh border of which only 2500 of the 3000 km land border has been fenced (total land and water border is 4100 km).

India's inability to protect its porous maritime border has been under media scrutiny since it came to light that the perpetrators of the 11/26 Mumbai attacks arrived by sea. In Tamil Nadu, coast guard and police officials, as well as security analysts, all acknowledge that the government is unable to sufficiently monitor the thousands of small commercial fishing vessels that ply the waters between India and Sri Lanka.

The Indian government has implemented an advance passenger information system by which it receives inbound passenger information from air carriers operating in India. The system, however, is not compatible with or able to share data with the American and EU equivalent systems. In addition, the GOI and air carriers have shown an increased interest in receiving fraudulent document training from the U.S. as well as similar training provided by other countries.

13. (U) Embassy POC is Martha Mashav: MashavMC@state.gov

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